

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00280 051402Z
ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0280

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, NS
SUBJ: RETURN TO POLITICS AS USUAL

REF : PARAMARIBO 0255

SUMMARY: ARRON CABINET HAS SURVIVED IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF
SOEMITA AFFAIR AND FOCUS OF POLITICAL LIFE HAS RETURNED TO
PREPARATIONS FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR.

1. THE LONG-AWAITED PUBLIC MEETING OF PARLIAMENT DEMANDED BY
THE OPPOSITION TO DISCUSS RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN
SURINAM WAS FINALLY HELD APRIL 1, WITH THE OPPOSITION ULTIM-
ATELY WALKING OUT BECAUSE OF A FIVE-MINUTE LIMITATION PLACED
ON INDIVIDUAL SPEECHES BUT NOT TAKING ANY ACTIONS TO TEST
THE NPK GOVERNING COMBINATION'S RENEWED MAJORITY. PRIME
MINISTER ARRON'S CABINET HAS THUS APPARENTLY SURVIVED THREAT
TO ITS ABILITY TO GOVERN RESULTING FROM SOEMITA AFFAIR AND WILL
NOW PROCEED TO GET PARLIAMENTARY ACTION ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT
PIECES OF LEGISLATION.

2. WITH RENEWAL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ARRON'S NPS, BRUMA'S
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PNR, THE PSV, AND THE KTPI, FORMER SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER
SOEPMAN HAS RETURNED TO HIS CABINET POST. ANNOUNCEMENT
ACCOMPANYING RESUMPTION OF THE NPK GOVERNMENT COMBINATION
STATED THAT MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, AND
FISHERIES WOULD ALSO BE HELD OPEN FOR A KTPI-ER.

3. MEANWHILE, FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER SOEMITA, WHOSE

INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPTION CHARGES PRECIPITATED THE EVENTS OF THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, HAS RECLAIMED HIS SEAT IN PARLIAMENT REPLACING KTPI MEMBER MARTODIHARDJO WHO WAS COMPELLED BY LAW TO GIVE UP HIS SEAT TO SOEMITA. BECUASE SOEMITA IS PRESENTLY IN POLICE CUSTODY, HE IS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT; BUT HE WILL RECEIVE NOTIFICATIONS OF MEETINGS AND OTHER PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP.

4. FOCUS OF ATTENTION WILL NOW SHIFT BACK TO PREPARATIONS FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS GENERALLY EXPECTED SOMETIME THIS SUMMER. GOVERNMENT IS NOW COMMITTED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ELECTION COMMISSION AND HAS PROMISED A PROPOSAL TO COUNTER OPPOSITION-INTRODUCED BILL SETTING UP SUCH A COMMISSION. PRIME MINISTER ARRON STILL REFUSES TO NAME A DATE FOR ELECTIONS PUBLICLY AND IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT TALK OF AN ELECTION DATE IS PREMATURE UNTIL PARLIAMENT HAS DEALT WITH A NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE BILL, A PROPOSAL TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A 200-MILE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE, AND AMENDMENT OF THE ELECTORAL LAWS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW ELECTION COMMISSION.

5. WHILE CONCLUSION OF SOEMITA AFFAIR MUST AWAIT COURSE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM, NPK HAS SURVIVED IMMEDIATE PARLIAMENTARY CRISIS AND WILL TURN NOW TO REBUILDING SUPPORT IT MAY HAVE LOST AMONG KTPI ALLIES AND OTHERS AND PERHAPS EXTENDING ITS COOPERATION WITH ADDITIONAL GROUPS INCLUDING HINDUSTANIS SUPPORTING THE HPP OF GEORGE HINDORIE. OPPOSITION, MEANWHILE, IS COUNTING ON CONTINUING CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT TO FURTHER UNDERMINE SUPPORT
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FOR THE NPK; AND THEREFORE, IS NOT UNHAPPY WITH ADDITIONAL TIME BEFORE CAMPAIGNING BEGINS IN EARNEST.
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